



Senator Feinstein Raises Concern Over DC School Voucher Program
-- urges renewed effort to attract students from low-performing schools --

February 11, 2005

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) has written to the president of the Washington Scholarship Fund to express her concern about the large number of private school vouchers being awarded to Washington, DC children already enrolled in private schools.

Senator Feinstein's letter to Sally Sachar, president & CEO of the Washington Scholarship Fund which oversees the DC public school voucher program, follows:

February 10, 2005

Ms. Sally Sachar
President & CEO
Washington Scholarship Fund
1133 15th Street, NW, Suite 550
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Sachar,

I am writing to you about my continued concern regarding private school students being awarded scholarships through the pilot program and the need to focus more intensively on students from the neediest public schools during the second year of the program.

It is my understanding that 187 scholarships were awarded to students already attending private schools in the first year of the program. I have been deeply concerned about this because my purpose for supporting the pilot program was to learn whether students currently attending failing public schools would improve academically in a private school environment.

It is imperative that as many as possible low-income DC students from the neediest schools have an opportunity to attend the private school of their choice. By allowing a surprisingly large number of private school students to be awarded scholarships, the Washington Scholarship Fund is preventing fewer public school students from taking advantage of this opportunity.

I do not believe we should let this occur again in the second year and in the remaining years of the pilot program otherwise the validity of it will be

nullified. Please let me know if private school students will continue to receive scholarships. Thank you very much for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

cc: Mayor Anthony Williams, District of Columbia

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